

REMARKS

Claim 12 has been amended to correct a typographical error. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this application and other applications. Claims 1-15 are pending in this application.

Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barns-Slavin et al. (U.S. 5,072,397) in view of Raju et al. (U.S. 2003/0037008) and further in view of Chernin (U.S. 6,643,694). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention is directed to a method and system for processing one or more mail pieces to automatically associate a manually entered postage amount to a class of service that supports the entered postage amount and to a system which implements the method. Claim 1 as amended is directed to a method for processing one or more mail pieces that comprises "receiving a postage amount entered by a user, said postage amount to be applied to said one or more mail pieces; searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount; if no class of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying an error message; if one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying said found one or more classes of service to said user; receiving a selected class of service, said selected class of service being selected by said user from said displayed one or more classes of service; applying said postage amount to said one or more mail pieces; and storing transaction information for each of said one or more mail pieces, said transaction information including said postage amount and said selected class of service."

Barns-Slavin, in contrast, is directed to a carrier management system that includes a scale for weighing parcels to be shipped, a computer connected to receive data from the scale related to the weight of the parcel, and a keyboard enabling operator input to the computer. The keyboard has a plurality of selection keys corresponding to carriers and classes. (Col. 1, lines 53-59). In operation, a parcel is placed on the scale and the user is prompted to enter an identification number of the parcel. Next the user is prompted to enter a carrier/class

selection. In response thereto, the user depresses one of the keys of the keyboard to select the desired carrier and class of service. (Col. 4, line 61 to Col. 5, line 14). Based on the selection of the carrier and class made by the user, and the weight of the parcel from the scale, the system then calculates the rate for shipping the parcel. (See Col. 3, lines 20-42). Thus, the system in Barns-Slavin operates similarly to the conventional systems described in the Background portion of the Specification (Paragraph [0003]), in which a user weighs a mail piece, selects a class of service and the system determines the proper postage for the mail piece based on the measured weight and class of service. As noted in the Office Action, there is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Barns-Slavin of receiving a postage amount from the user; searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount; if no class of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount is found, display an error message, or if one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount is found, displaying the found one or more classes of service to the user.

To overcome the above deficiencies, the Office Action relies on the reference to Raju. Raju is directed to a system that allows a user to print a sheet of stamps having user selected values. In Raju, the user inputs a price in the individual rate input field of the particular label panel, and then clicks on the corresponding postage rate class menu button and selects a postage rate class. ((Paragraph [0083]). Thus, in Raju, the user inputs a desired postage rate and the user selects a postage rate class. The system in Raju does not perform any type of searching of any information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount. The user manually selecting a postage amount and then manually selecting a postage class is not the same as searching rate tables for one or more classes of services having a postage rate that matches the postage amount. In Raju, the user can select any class of service, even if the selected class of service does not support the input postage rate.

Furthermore, since the system of Raju does not perform any type of searching to determine if there are any classes of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount, the system in Raju will never display an error message if no class of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount is found, or if one or more classes of service

having a postage rate that matches the postage amount is found, display the found one or more classes or service to the user. The system in Raju utilizes a drop down menu box to allow the user to select the desired class of service (see Fig. 13, element 1123-11). The system of Raju does not search for a class of service having a postage rate that matches the input postage amount, it simply displays all classes and allows the user to make a selection, regardless of whether or not the selected class supports the input postage rate. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Raju of “searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount; if no class of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying an error message; if one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying said found one or more classes of service to said user” as is recited in claim 1.

The reference to Chernin was relied upon to teach displaying an error message if no matches are found. The system in Chernin is directed to an e-mail system that searches e-mail archives for a text string input by a user. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Chernin of “searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount; if no class of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying an error message; if one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying said found one or more classes of service to said user” as is recited in claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is allowable over the prior art of record. Claims 2-7, dependent upon claim 1, are allowable along with claim 1 and on their own merits.

Claim 8 includes limitations substantially similar to those of claim 1. For the same reasons given above with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 8 is allowable over the prior art of record. Claims 9-15, dependent upon claim 8, are allowable along with claim 8 and on their own merits.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this case are in a condition for allowance and favorable action thereon is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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